

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSM-03
IO-13 MCT-01 AID-05 CU-02 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 OC-06
CCO-00 PC-01 /089 W
-----131523Z 054225 /44

O P 131236Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 917
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY
AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 3590

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PK, PINT
SUBJECT: CRISIS CONTINUES

SUMMARY: RUMORS ABOUT T J PMBS
POLITICAL FUTURE CONTINUE
TO SPREAD, AND A GENERAL FEELING EXISTS THAT EITHER A DECISION
HAS BEEN TAKEN, OR ONE WILL BE JKEN IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE,
ENDING THE IMPASSE. ALMOST ALL BELIEVE THAT NO MATTER WHAT
THE MODALITIES OF THE ARRANGEMENT, IT WILL SPELL THE END
OF BHUTTNHJS POLITICAL LEADERSHIP. WE DO NOT BELIEVE ARMY
WANTS TO ASSUME ROLE OF POLITICAL RULE; AT SAME TIME IT DOES
NOT WANT CONTINUING DETERIORATION IN LAW AND ORDER SITUATION.
WE CONSEQUENTLY BELIEVE ARMY IS MOST PROBABLY PLAYING ROLE
IN ATTEMPTING TO CONVINCE OR COERCE BOTH SIDES TO NEGOTIATE
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POLITICAL SETTLEMENT.
THE PM'S SUPPORTERS ARE BEGINNING TO DESERT HIM,
INCLUDING PPP GENERAL SECRETARY MUBASHIR HASAN, AND THERE ARE
RUMORS OF MANY MORE PREPARING TO BOLT. PM IS ALSO BURDENED
BY INABILITY TO CONTROL LAW AND ORDER SITUATION. OPPOSITION
IS RELUCTANT TO ACCEPT NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT OFFERING ANYTHING
LESS THAN BHUTTO'S COMPLETE SURRENDER. WE ASSUME, HOWEVER,

AT ARMY URGING, IT IS CONSIDERING PROPOSALS TO END THE CONFRONTATION. WE HAVE REPORTS THAT ACTING PAKISTAN NATIONAL ALLIANCE LEADEL

NW ABZADA NASRULLAH KHAN IS MEETING WITH VARIOUS OPPOSITION LEADERS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY TO DISCUSS PROPOSALYLVB END THE STALEMATE.

IT IS STILL AN OPEN QUESTION WHAT WILL EMERGE IF BHUTTO DOES FALL. IF JAMY CANNOT COERCE PM AND OPPOSITION INTO SETTLEMENT, IT WILL BE FACED WITH KELFVATABLE CHOICE OF WITNESSING CONTINUED DISINTEGRATION OF SITUATION OR TAKING OVER THE GOVERNMENT WITH ALL THAT IMPL8ES. END SUMMARY.

1. RUMORS ABOUT THE PRIMEHMINISTER'S POLITICAL FUTURE CONTINUE TO SWEEP THE PAKISTAN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE. THEY RANGE THE GAMUT FROM ONE THAT BHUTTO IS A PRISONER AND HAS BEEN BROUGHT BACK TO PINDI UNDER ARMY GUARD TO ANOTHER THAT HE IS STILL IN LAHORE AND PLAYING AN ACTIVEOUELITICAL ROLE. WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO VERIFY THE REPORT SENT TO THE DEPARTMENT LAST NIGHT (ISLAMABAD 3552), BUT THERE CONTINUES TO BE A GENERAL FEELING THAT EITHER ADECISION HAS BEEN TAKEN, OR THAT ONE WILL BE TAKEN IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, ENDING THE IMPASSE. THE ALMOST UNIVERSALLY HELD BELIEF IS THAT NO MATTER WHAT THE MODALITIES OF THE ARRANGEMENT ARE, IT WILL SPELL THE END OF THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP OF ZULFIQAR ALI BHUTTO.

2. IN ATTEMPTING TO ASSESS WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE PRESENT CONFUSING POLITICAL THEATER IN PAKISTAN, A NUMBER OF POINTS EMERGE FROM THE VARIOUS REPORTS AND CONVERSATIONS WE HAVE CONFIDENTIAL

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HAD OVER THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS. WE STILL BELIEVE THAT THE ARMY DOES NOT WANT TO ASUME JWAIN THE ROLE OF POLITICAL RULER OF THE COUNTRY. IT HAS LEARNED WELL THE LESSONS OF HOW TREACHEROUS SUCH A COURSE CAN BE AND WILL NOT WANT TO PURSUE IT AGAIN. AT THE SAME TIME, THE ARMY LEADERSHIP DOES NOT WANT TO SEE THE CONTINUING DETERIORATION OF LAW AND ORDER AND INCREASING CHAOS IN THE COUNTRY. WE CONSEQUENTLY BELIEVE THAT THE ARMY IS IN ALL LIKELIHOOD PLAYING AN ACTIVE ROLE IN ATTEMPTING TO EITHER PERSUADE OR COERCE BOTH SIDES TO SIT DOWN AND HAMMER OUT AN ACCEPTABLE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. EMBOFF WAS TOLD BY PERSONAL SECRETARY TO ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF EVDFING APRIL 12 THAT WHAT WAS NEEDED WAS FOR "SOMEONE" TO TAKE BOTH PARTIES "BY THE SCRUFF OF THE NECK AND MAKE THEM SIT DOWN TOGETHER AND COME TO AN AGREEMENT." IT IS OUR VIEW THAT ONLY THE ARMY CAN FORCE SUCH A DIALOGUE.

3. THE DIFFICULTY THE ARMY FACES, IF IT IS INDEED PLAYING THIS ACTIVE ROLE, IS THAT IT IS DEALING WITH A CONSTANTLY CHANGING POLITICAL EQUATION. EACH DAY THAT PASSES WITNESSES

A FURTHER DETERIORATION IN BHUTTO'S STRENGTH-AND THEREFORE
THE CLOUT HE BRINGS TO ANY NEGOTIATION-AND GROWING SUPPORT
FOR THE OPPOSITION'S GOAL OF ENDING THE PM'S POLITICAL CAREER.
THE PM IS NOW FACED WITH THE SPECTACLE OF HIS ERSTWHILE
SUPPORTERS BEGINNING TO DESERT HIS FLAG. THE LEFTIST
MUBASHIR HASSAN, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE PPP, HAS RESIGNED
HIS POSITION AND IS REPORTEDLY LEAVING FOR EGYPT TO JOIN HIS
YOUNGER BROTHER WHO IS WORKING IN CAIRO. SARDAR AHMED F
C
OF KASUR, A PPP MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, HAS ANNOUNCED
HE IS QUITTING THE PARTY-THE FIRST MNA TO DO SO-AND HAS
ISSUED A TEN POINT LIST OF DEMANDS INCLUDING A CALL FOR
THE PM'S RESIGNATION. A.H. KARDAR, A PUNJAB MPA, HAS
RESIGNED HIS SEAT IN THE ASSEMBLY. THESE DESERTIONS FOLLOW
OTHERS
ANNOUNCED OVER THE WEEKEND, AND HAVE BEEN ACCOMPANIED
BY RUMORS MZAT MANY MORE ARE IN THE CARDS.
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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSM-03
IO-13 MCT-01 AID-05 CU-02 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 OC-06
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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 3590

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

4. AN EVEN MORE IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN BHUTTO'S WEAKENING POLITICAL POSITION, OF COURSE, IS WHAT NOW SEEMS INCREASINGLY TO BE ACCEPTED AS AN INABILITY ON HIS PART TO CONTROL THE LAW AND ORDER SITUATION. AS CONSULATE GENERAL LAHORE IS REPORTING, THIS CONTINUES TO DETERIORATE THROUGHOUT THE KEY PUNJAB PROVINCE, PARTICULARLY IN LAHORE ITSELF. WHAT FEW CARDS BHUTTO STILL HOLDS ARE FOR THE MOST PART RELATED TO HIS ABILITY TO PLUNGE THE COUNTRY INTO FURTHER AGITATION AND BLOODSHED. HE COULD SEND HIS PPP SUPPORTERS INTO THE STREETS TO ATTACK PNA SUPPORTERS. (THIS HAS ALREADY BEGUN TO HAPPEN IN NULTAN). BUT THERE SEEMS NO SIZEABLE BLOC OF SUPPORTERS WHO ARE PREPARED TO SUPPORT HIM TO THE LAST DITCH, AND WHO COULD CONSTITUTE A SERIOUS POLITICAL PROBLEM FOR A SUCCESSOR REGIME. THE PM HAS LITTLE POSITIVE TO OFFER, AND EVEN HIS LONG-STANDING (AND ARGUABLE) CLAIM THAT THE DISPARATE OPPOSITION

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CANNOT GOVERN EFFECTIVELY HAS LIMITED RELEVANCE IN A SITUATION IN WHICH MORE AND MORE PAKISTANIS SEEM TO BE DETERMINED TO SEE HIM OUT OF OFFICE WHATEVER THE CONSEQUENCES. MANY BELIEVE ALL HE CAN BRING TO NEGOTIATIONS NOW IS AN OFFER TO LEAVE QUIETLY AND COOPERATE IN ARRANGING A LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT.

5. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE OPPOSITION IS UNDOUBTEDLY RELUCTANT TO ACCEPT A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WHICH OFFERS IT ANY LESS THAN BHUTTO'S COMPLETE SURRENDER. WE ASSUME THAT IT IS NOW CONSIDERING, AT ARMY URGING, PROPOSALS FOR ENDING THE POLITICAL CRISIS, AND IT IS LIKELY TO TAKE A TOUGH BARGAINING STANCE. (SEE LAHORE 353 BEING REPEATED TO DEPARTMENT.) ACTING PAKISTAN NATIONAL ALLIANCE CHIEF NAWABZADA NASRULLAH KHAN, REPORTEDLY MET WITH ASGHAR KHAN IN JAIL NEAR LAHORE ON MONDAY. YESTERDAY HE WENT TO THE FRONTIER WHERE HE MET WITH MUFTI MAHMUD AND BEGUM WALI KHAN, BOTH OF WHOM ARE UNDER DETENTION. MANY POLITICAL OBSEVERS BELIEVE NASRULLAH IS CARRYING A PROPOSAL TO END THE CONFRONTATVPN AND IS DISCUSSING THIS WITH MAJOR OPPOSITION LEADERS.

6. THOSE WHO ARE ENCOURAGING NEGOTIATIONS ARE FACED WITH THE REALIZATION THAT FRIDAY COULD WELL ERUPT INTO ANOTHER DAY OF MAJOR AGITATION IN LAHORE. STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS HAVE CALLED FOR PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE PUNJAB CAPITAL THAT DAY, AND A NATIONAL LAWYERS MEETING HAS BEEN CALLED FOR LAHORE ON THE 15TH AS WELL. THE CITY IS HIGHLY VOLATILE IN ANY CASE AND THE PRESENCE OF STUDENTS AND LAWYERS DEMONSTRATING ON THE 15TH WILL MAKE THE SITUATION THAT MUCH MORE INCENDIARY.

7. IT IS STILL AN OPEN QUESTION WHATKIND OF SETTLEMENT WILL
EMERGE IF BHUTTO DOES FALL SOON. WE ARE SENDING
SEPTTEL ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS CONCERNING
A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT, BUT WE DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE
PAKISTANI ABILITY TO FIND A LEGAL PATINA TO JUSTIFY WHATEVER
THEY WANT TO DO. THE CENTRAL QUESTION NOW IS WHETHER, IF
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BHUTTO'S DAYS ARE INDEED NUMBERED, THE ARMY CAN COERCE THE
OPPOSITION AND THE PM INTO ACHIEVING A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION
TO THE CONFLICT. IF IT IS SUCCESSFUL, WE EXPECT THE FORMULA
WILL INCLUDE, AT A MINIMUM, STRIPPING BHUTTO OF ALL EFFECTIVE
POWER AND HOLDING NEW NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS. IF THE
ARMY IS NOT SUCCESSFUL, IT MAY BE FACED WITH THE UNPALATABLE
CHOICE OF EITHER CONTINUING TO WITNESS THE GROWING DISINTEGRATION
OF LAW AND ORDER AND AN INCREASINGLY INEFFECTUAL PRIME MINISTER
HARRIED BY A VENGEFUL OPPOSITION; OR ASSUMING EITHER COMPLETE
OR DE FACTO CONTROL WITH ALL THAT IMPLIES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, OPPOSITION PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
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